

— 9 —

the tree, that dimples the surface of the lake, that gives variety and majesty to the ocean, when accumulated in masses lashes itself into the tempest and strews the shore with wrecks of human life and property. The learned member standing amidst the wrecks of navies and the whitening bones of human victims might eloquently describe the scene; but would he, if he could, attempt to restrain the eccentricities of nature, or to forbid to man, by human laws, the benefits of navigation? How beautiful is water! (The temperance man's own element) Yet how dangerous. The rain which fertilizes the fields, sweeps away with its excess, bridges, mills and human habitations. If not drained off, it sours the land and breeds pestilence in cities. The fire that warms our hearts, that clears our woodlands, that smelts our metals, that drives our steamers and locomotives, is not less dangerous. Would he deny to man the use of these elements because the casualties by fire and flood are most disastrous? Would he forbid their use, because people are burned in cities, drowned in the rivers, because a boiler bursts at sea, or an engine sometimes runs off the track, or kills hundreds by the violence of a collision? William the Conqueror, it is true, once denied to the people of England fire and light after the curfew tolled; but the abhorrence in which the act was held would not encourage anybody to follow his example.

Woman is God's best gift to man. The fascination which she spreads around her—how difficult to resist; the passions she inspires—how intimately interwoven with all that arouses to exertion and rewards us for our toils! Yet, when even love is indulged in to excess, when reason is overpowered, when passion hurries on to folly—how numerous the victims, how blasting the effects! Yet who would, reasoning from the perils of indulgence and the dangers of society, deny to man the companionship which alone makes existence tolerable? The learned member for Annapolis might draw from the sinks of vice or even from the agony of a single victim, some harrowing pictures; but would he, on that account, imitate the Turks and lock up all the women? The victims of indulgence in opium I have never seen, but even spirituous liquors do not produce the extent of physical suffering and moral dislocation that result from the abuse of this drug. But would the learned member deny to society the use of that which allays the delirium of fever—which soothes the infant upon the mother's bosom and saves more lives than it ever destroys? Take gunpowder, which blasts our rocks, loosens our plaster, defends our country, kills our game. Mark the mischiefs and miseries it produces when its mysterious power is abused. But who would argue that, because boys blow themselves up and tyrants use gunpowder for unworthy purposes, its use should be forbidden? Would the learned gentleman, even with the battlefields of Balaclava or Inkerman before him, attempt to restrain by human laws, the manufacture and sale of gunpowder? Who denies that law is the safeguard of our lives and property; that courts are indispensable institutions; that lawyers are the fearless advocates of the innocent and oppressed? But has not even law been abused? How many pettifoggers defile the courts, ensnare the ignorant, waste men's estates and embitter their lives? Walter Scott's Peebles and Planestanes, and Dickens' pictures of the Court of Chancery are familiar to us all. These are but sketches illustrative of the evils inseparable from the dispensation of equity and law by the most perfect tribunals of civilized countries. How are these evils to be mitigated or removed? I would say by discussion, by exposure, by example, by honest and successful attempts to separate the securities and legitimate practice of law from its abuse. The learned advocate of this bill, to be consistent, should close the courts, imprison the lawyers, and forbid the manufacture of law or its importation from foreign countries. Woman, from her first appearance on the scene of life, has brought sorrow and suffering with her. In her train came rivalries and jealousies, and war and strife. Let the learned member go into his own country where the pretty faces peeping through the apple-blossoms are lovely to behold. Even there, are there no broken hearts, no pale faces, no blighted lives, no damaged reputations? No girls with Burns' pretty excuse upon their lips?